

Application No.: 10/725,197

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Docket No.: 324212003700

REMARKS**Claim Status**

Claims 1-50 are pending in this application. The Office indicates claims 1-50 are rejected. In this response, the Applicants amended claims 1, 15, 17, 19-21, 31, 45 and 47. Accordingly, claims 1-59 are currently under consideration.

The amendments to claims 1, 15, 17, 19-21, 31, 45 and 47 are fully supported by the original specification. Therefore no new matter is added. Thus, the Applicants believe that claims 1-59 are allowable.

Rejection of claims 1-30 under 35 U.S.C. § 101

The Office rejected claims 1-30 under 35 U.S.C. 101 for allegedly claiming inventions directed to non-statutory subject matter.

In response to this rejection, the Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 21 to recite that the invention relates to a "computer-implemented method for searching" to clarify the statutory subject matter. Consequently, claims 2-20 and 22-30, which are dependent thereon, are allowable. The Applicants submit that this amendment clarifies the statutory nature of claims 1-30 and respectfully request the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 101 be withdrawn.

Rejection of claims 1-12, 15, 19-30, 31-42, 45 and 49-50 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

The Office rejected claims 1-12, 15, 19-30, 31-42, 45 and 49-50 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Zamir et al., US 2005/0240580 ("Zamir").

Claims 1, 21 and 31 are amended to now recite, among other things, "providing a plurality of candidate search terms related to said first search term, wherein said candidate search terms are generated in accordance with relevancy scores, and said candidate search terms comprise potential alternative search terms." Providing a plurality of candidate search terms "effectively guides users to narrow their search by guiding users to select or click highly related search terms."

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(Page 2, paragraph [0006]). Therefore when the user clicks on any one of the provided candidate search terms, another search is performed using the user selected/specified candidate term (e.g., a more accurate search term). This helps the user to achieve a narrower search result than with the first search term. For example:

Figure 2 illustrates a flowchart of a method 200 for generating a plurality of candidate search terms or related search terms. In one embodiment, the present invention attempts to assist the user in narrowing or focusing the user's search. For example, a user who provides a search term "Apple" will be presented with a plurality of narrower or more refined search terms such as "ipod", "computer", "powerbook g4", "apple peeler", "apple pie", "apple cider vinegar", and so on. This ability to assist the user to quickly arrive to a narrower search term will greatly enhance the user's searching experience. (Page 5, paragraph [0023]; See figs. 6, 7 and 8) (Emphasis added)

In contrast, Zamir discloses re-ordering search result entries for a given user based on ranking or relevancy associated with his/her user profile. Zamir's search results page does not include potential alternative search terms:

[0012] When the search engine receives a search query from a user, it identifies a set of placed content that matches the search query. Each placed content is associated with a rank based at least in part a similarity of the placed content to the user profile. The placed content items are then ordered according to their ranks. (Zamir, paragraph [0012]) (Emphasis added)

[0013] The present invention, including user profile construction and search results re-ordering and/or scoring, can be implemented on either the client side or the server side of a client-server network environment. (Zamir, paragraph [0013]) (Emphasis added)

Thus, Zamir does not disclose or suggest "providing a plurality of candidate search terms related to said first search term ... said candidate search terms compris[ing] potential alternative search terms," as now recited in each of amended independent claims 1, 21 and 31. Nor does Zamir disclose or suggest that the "candidate search terms are generated in accordance with relevancy scores."

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For at least the foregoing, claims 2-12, 15-20, 22-30, 32-42, 45 and 49-50, which are dependent from claims 1, 21 and 31, are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the rejections to claims 1-12, 15, 19-30, 31-42, 45 and 49-50 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) be withdrawn.

Rejection of claims 13-14, 16-18, 43-44 and 46-48 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Office has rejected claims 13-14, 16-18, 43-44 and 46-48 as being unpatentable over Zamir.

At least for the foregoing reasons given above for independent claims 1, 21 and 31, claims 13-14, 16-18, 43-44 and 46-48 dependent thereon are allowable. Consequently, the Applicants submit that claims 13-14, 16-18, 43-44 and 46-48 are patentable over Zamir and respectfully request the rejection under 35 USC § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Claims 15, 17, 19-20, 45 and 47 are amended to recite "search term" as now the "first search term" and/or to clarify grammar and syntax. No new matter is added.

New claims 51-59, which depend from one of claims 1, 21 or 31, are allowable over Zamir for at least the same reasons given above for independent claims 1, 21 and 31. New claims 51-59 are supported by the Application as filed. For example, support for claims 51-59 is provided at Pages 14-15, Paragraph 0084:

For example, a purchase or a click at a very low position document (e.g., far to the right in one embodiment) within the related search term set will indicate a high relevancy of that document relating to the search term. If the data (e.g., purchase and/or click data) supports repositioning, then the list of related search terms would be repositioned so that the most relevant related search term would be presented at the highest position. For example, if users who use the search term "shoes" often actually purchase "platform shoes", then the related search term "platform shoes" may be repositioned to a higher display position relative to other types of shoes. (Pages 14-15, Paragraph 0084) (Emphasis added)

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Conclusion

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 324212003700. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

Dated: February 28, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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